enunciation of National Mineral Policy, 2008. The policy seeks to encourage employment and tertiary sector spin offs from value addition as well as from mining so as to maximise the contribution of the mineral sector to the country's gross domestic product. The Government has approved new National Mineral Policy, 2008 on 13.3.2008. The new National Mineral Policy has been tabled in the Parliament and is available on website of Ministry of Mines *(http://mines.nic.in)*.

Mines in Maharashtra

2244. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of mines of various minerals identified in Maharashtra during the last three years;

(b) whether there are more potential mineral reserves in Maharashtra which are yet to be mined and exploited;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps proposed to be taken thereon;

(d) whether some agitations have been made by the farmers/communities against the land acquisition for mines in Maharashtra; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) As per available information, the details of reporting mines in Maharastra state is given below:—

Year	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Number of Reporting Mines	150	150	149

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The details of mineral reserves in Maharashtra are given in the Mineral Year Book, published by Indian Bureau of Mines, a copy of which has been supplied to the Parliament Library. To assess the mineral resources, various exploration agencies such as Geological Survey of India, Directorate of Geology and Mining, Maharastra, Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited, Manganese Ore India Limited *etc.* are engaged in exploration of base metal, coal, iron ore, Pyrophyllite/sillimanite, manganese ore *etc*.

(d) and (e) The information is being collected and shall be laid on the Table of the House.

Mining activities in Niyamgiris

2245. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government proposes to grant permission to a multinational company to dig up the Niyamgiris (Orissa) which is rich in Bauxite and is used in manufacture of aluminium;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this move of Government to grant permission is being opposed by environmentalists, anthropologists and a fact finding committee appointed by the Supreme Court as digging up the Niyamgiris would be a social and environmental catastrophe and would pollute rivers and streams on which thousands of people depend; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (d) The Central Government on the proposal/recommendation of the State Government of Orissa had conveyed prior approval in favour of M/s Orissa Mining Corporation Limited for grant of mining lease for Bauxite ore over an area of 721.323 ha. in Lanjigarh, Distt. Kalahandi and Raigada for a period of 30 (thirty) years. The Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) and the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) constituted by Supreme Court of India considered the issues of diversion of forest land on rivers/streams, flora and fauna, soil and hydrology and the Supreme Court of India granted clearance for forest diversion proposal for diversion of 660.749 ha. of forest land to undertake Bauxite Mining on Niyamgiri Hills in Lanjigarh on which suitable action has been taken.

Conversions to other religions

2246. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of Christian population in the country as per 1991 and 2001 census respectively;

(b) whether Government is aware of any forcible conversion from Hinduism to Christianity or from Christianity to Hinduism;

(c) whether any case has been registered in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and Government's action in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) Percentage of Christian population in the country as per 1991 and 2001 census was 2.342 and 2.341 respectively.

(b) to (d) 'Public Order' and 'Police' are State subjects as per the Constitution of India and hence prevention, detection, registration, investigation and prosecution of crimes are primarily the concern of the State Governments/UT Administrations.

Some State Governments have enacted laws providing for prohibition of conversion from one religious faith to any other religious faith by use of force or inducement or by fraudulent means, *etc*.

Economic status of minorities

†2247. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.